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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 001289

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SUBJECT: FRENCH DONATIONS TO IRAQI AND AFGHAN SECURITY FORCES

REF: SECSTATE 22896

Classified By: Political Minister-Counselor Josiah Rosenblatt for Reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

1. (C) SUMMARY: Post delivered reftel points to various MFA and MOD officials responsible for Iraq, Afghanistan and NATO. On Iraq, the regional bureau described itself as "not opposed" to providing assistance but adduced a number of preconditions to be fulfilled that make assistance unlikely. The French position was less tentative on providing donations to Afghan security forces. One MFA official pointed out that a key objective of NATO efforts in ISAF is to ensure that Afghans are able to assume their own security but cautioned that any decision would need to take account of France's budgetary situation. The MFA Afghanistan desk officer said he was certain that the issue of Afghan security donations would come up during the March 9 visit of the Afghan National Army Chief of Staff General Bismillah Khan to Paris. END SUMMARY.

IRAQ SECURITY DONATIONS: FRANCE CAUTIOUSLY "NOT OPPOSED" TO GIVING AID

2. (C) Antoine Sivan, MFA DAS-equivalent for Iraq/Iran/Arabian Gulf Affairs, described his regional bureau as "not opposed" to the notion of providing material assistance to the Iraqi security forces. At the same time, he offered a number of caveats, noting that: non-lethal assistance would be much easier to approve than lethal assistance, which would entail a lengthy inter-agency process; any assistance would have to have clear end-use guarantees, to ensure that materiel did not end up in the hands of militias; assistance could not entail the deployment of any GoF support staff (military or technical) within Iraq to support the donation; and the GoF would await formation of Iraq's permanent government and a more specific request from that government before taking any decisions. On the latter point, Poloff stressed that the Iraqi Ministry of Defense and Interior had already prepared a detailed, prioritized list of requirements in conjunction with the NATO Training Mission in Iraq (NTM-1), which had been circulated to the GoF via NATO channels. Poloff also stressed that vast majority of high priority items on the Iraqi Requirements List consisted of non-lethal assistance. Poloff later gave Sivan a copy of the NATO list, stressing the need for expedited donations to the ISF. Sivan conceded he had not seen the list, and offered to review it in greater detail. Frigate Captain Jean-Mathieu Rey in the MFA office for Military and Defense Cooperation said that any decision to donate to Iraqi security forces would be political.

3. (C) COMMENT: While the GoF has not said no to assisting the ISF, we did not detect a high degree of motivation in responding to this request. We will continue to press our GoF contacts to offer a significant and timely contribution, particularly given the GoF's professed desire to help foster a democratic and stable Iraq, GoF officials' frequent insinuations that Iraq will not be fully sovereign until it is in control of its own security, and the total lack of progress in implementing the long-stalled GoF offer to train Iraqi police outside Iraq. END COMMENT.

AFGHANISTAN SECURITY DONATIONS: FRENCH SUPPORTIVE, BUT DETAILS NOT YET KNOWN

4. (C) MFA Afghanistan desk officer, Cyril Gerardon, told Poloff that the relevant information had been passed to the MFA office for strategic affairs and to the MFA department for military and defense cooperation. He commented that the demarche had come at a good time, given that the French MFA and MOD were busy preparing for the visit of the Afghan National Army's Chief of Staff, General Bismillah Khan, scheduled for March 9. Gerardon added he was sure that military equipment needs would be discussed at that meeting which would be attended by the MFA A/S equivalent for Asia, Herve Ladsous, an MOD representative, and someone from the MFA's office of Strategic Affairs. Gerardon pointed out that in 2006, as part of their reconstruction pledges (not including pledges made at the London Conference), the French

would devote 700,000 euros for Afghan National Army officer training; 380,000 euros for counternarcotics police training and 250,000 euros for training of magistrates. The French, he added, have a vested interest in a secure Afghanistan.

15. (C) Poloff also delivered reftel points to Nicolas Niemtchinow, DAS-Equivalent director for NATO at MFA and NATO desk officer Xavier Chatel. Chatel told poloff that the general French position would be supportive of assisting the Afghan army, though, he added, budgetary considerations would likely dictate the final amount of French assistance. He stressed that bringing Afghanistan to a point where Afghans are able to assume their own security is a key objective of NATO efforts in ISAF and reminded that France has been helping to train the Afghan army.

16. (C) We also delivered list of equipment requirements to French Joint Staff officer responsible for NATO issues, Patrick Maquerie. He noted that the equipment list would be raised at various levels at the MOD and promised to get back with us with any official reaction.

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Stapleton